

## Film Review: Spectacular ‘The Hunger Games’ Lives Up to High Expectations

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 20, 2012 - 8:13am

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CHICAGO – Gary Ross’ “The Hunger Games” is a spectacular piece of blockbuster entertainment, a movie that should connect across all demographics from those who have never heard of the book to those who have shrines to Katniss and Peeta in their closets. It is more than mere Hollywood adaptation, it is a work of art on multiple levels with fantastic technical elements and some of the best performances in a work of science fiction in years. This is not just a great “blockbuster,” great “adaptation,” or great piece of “sci-fi.” It is a great MOVIE, period.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

The number of strikingly smart decisions made during the production of “The Hunger Games” will naturally make up the majority of this review but they can all be collected under the critical umbrella of the overall sense that Ross, his screenwriters (he shares credit with source material author Suzanne Collins and great writer Billy Ray), his cast (especially Jennifer Lawrence), and his technical team clearly all operated from a drive that they weren’t just making escapist entertainment. “The Hunger Games” could have been SO silly. It could have taken place in an exaggerated universe that bears no resemblance to our own and had its many complex themes and emotions turned up to eleven in an attempt to appeal to the lowest common denominator – to get the most teenage butts in the seats on repeat viewings to increase what I expect will be an ENORMOUS box office haul. It could have been “Twilight” just as easily as it could have been “Harry Potter.” But one gets the sense very early on in “The Hunger Games” that this is a film made not by committee or out of pure financial motivation but by people striving to make not just a profitable movie but a great one. There’s a craftsmanship here that you don’t often see in blockbusters.



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “The Hunger Games” in our reviews section.](#) [16]

It starts with Jennifer Lawrence, who is SO good that her performance will probably be underrated simply because her subtlety is unexpected in a film like this. She perfectly balances the strength and vulnerability of Katniss Everdeen, a young lady who volunteers to take the place of her sister when poor Prim Everdeen has her name called for the 74th Annual Hunger Games. Every year, the twelve districts of this future world send two “tributes” to the Games for a total of 24 teenage contestants. The two dozen young men and women are then whisked off to what are basically a series of promotional and training events. Learn how to fight but also learn how to smile, interview, and promote yourself to be popular enough for both producers and sponsors to want to keep you alive.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “The Hunger Games” review.](#) [16]

*“The Hunger Games” stars Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Woody Harrelson, Lenny Kravitz, Elizabeth Banks, Wes Bentley, Donald Sutherland, Paula Malcomson, and Liam Hemsworth. It was adapted from the book by Suzanne Collins by Gary Ross and Collins and Billy Ray. It was directed by Ross. It opens nationwide on March 23rd, 2012 and is rated PG-13.*



The Hunger Games

*Photo credit: Lionsgate*

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